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HOUSE BILL 61

46TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2003

INTRODUCED BY

Mimi Stewart

AN ACT

RELATING TO PUBLIC SCHOOLS; CREATING A THREE-YEAR KINDERGARTEN PLUS PILOT PROJECT TO STUDY THE EFFICACY OF EXTENDED KINDERGARTEN FOR DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS; ASSESSING THE EFFECT OF KINDERGARTEN PLUS ON THE LITERACY, NUMERACY AND COGNITIVE AND SOCIAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT OF PARTICIPANTS; PROVIDING FOR PILOT PROJECT ELIGIBILITY, PARTICIPATION CRITERIA AND EVALUATION; CREATING A FUND FOR PUBLIC AND PRIVATE GRANTS AND DONATIONS TO THE PILOT PROJECT; MAKING AN APPROPRIATION.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO:

Section 1. A new section of the Public School Code is enacted to read:

"[NEW MATERIAL] KINDERGARTEN PLUS--PILOT PROJECT--ELIGIBILITY--APPLICATION--REPORTING AND EVACUATION--CREATING A FUND. --

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1 A. The "kindergarten plus" pilot project is created
2 as a three-year study that extends the kindergarten year by
3 four months for participating students and measures the effect
4 of additional time on literacy, numeracy and social skills
5 development. The purpose of kindergarten plus is to
6 demonstrate that increased time in kindergarten narrows the
7 achievement gap between disadvantaged students and other
8 students and increases cognitive skills and leads to higher
9 test scores for all participants.

10 B. The pilot project shall be administered by the
11 department of education and shall provide the funding for
12 approved full-day kindergarten programs to be extended by forty
13 instructional days, beginning approximately two months earlier
14 and ending approximately two months later than other classes.
15 For the first year, the pilot project shall begin July 1 and
16 run two hundred twenty instructional days; in the second and
17 third years, kindergarten plus may begin or end at any time
18 that provides for the same number of instructional days.

19 C. Kindergarten plus shall be conducted in the
20 Albuquerque, Gallup-McKinley, Gadsden and Las Cruces school
21 districts. Full-day kindergarten programs in high-poverty
22 public schools in those school districts are eligible to apply
23 for kindergarten plus. For the purposes of kindergarten plus,
24 "high-poverty school" means a public school in which eighty-
25 five percent or more of the students are eligible for free or

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1 reduced lunch. If enough eligible high-poverty schools in
2 those school districts do not qualify for the pilot project for
3 the amount of funding available, the department of education
4 may extend eligibility to high-poverty schools in other school
5 districts.

6 D. The department of education shall determine
7 application requirements and procedures and criteria for
8 evaluating applications. An applicant must demonstrate that
9 its kindergarten plus program will meet all state board
10 standards and employ only qualified teachers and other staff.
11 The department shall provide additional professional
12 development for kindergarten plus teachers in how young
13 children learn to read. Teachers shall be paid at the same
14 rate and under the same terms for kindergarten plus as teachers
15 are paid for regular full-day kindergarten programs.

16 E. Students participating in kindergarten plus
17 shall be evaluated at the beginning of kindergarten plus and
18 their progress in literacy, numeracy and cognitive and social
19 skills shall be measured through standardized assessments in
20 kindergarten and in first grade. The department of education
21 shall provide additional professional development for
22 kindergarten plus teachers in how young children learn to read.

23 F. The department of education shall establish
24 reporting and evaluation requirements for participating
25 schools, including student and program assessments. The

underscored material = new
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1 department shall provide interim and final reports annually to
2 the legislature and the governor on the efficacy of the pilot
3 project.

4 G. In addition to legislative appropriations for
5 the pilot project, the department of education shall seek
6 public and private grants and donations. Grants and donations
7 shall be deposited in the "kindergarten plus fund" created in
8 the state treasury. Income from investment of the fund shall
9 be deposited in the fund. The department shall administer the
10 fund and money in the fund is appropriated to the department to
11 carry out the purposes of the pilot project. Money shall be
12 expended in accordance with the terms of the grants and
13 donations. Unless otherwise specified by the terms of a grant
14 or donation, money in the fund at the end of the pilot project
15 shall revert to the general fund. Expenditures from the fund
16 shall be by warrants of the secretary of finance and
17 administration drawn pursuant to vouchers signed by the state
18 superintendent or his authorized representative. "

19 Section 2. APPROPRIATION. -- One million dollars
20 (\$1,000,000) is appropriated from the general fund to the state
21 department of public education for expenditure in fiscal year
22 2004 to conduct the first year of the kindergarten plus pilot
23 project. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at
24 the end of fiscal year 2004 shall not revert to the general
25 fund.

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